

Mr. Bishop (GA) - Madame Speaker, I rise in favor of HR 4899, the Supplemental Appropriations for FY 2010.

As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, I, along with many of my colleagues, have been integrally involved in the oversight of our nation's funding and support of our efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, as well as other initiatives aimed at supporting our war fighters.

The Senate's bill, which we are considering tonight, provides \$58.8 billion in supplemental funds for FY 2010, including \$37.1 billion for the war and \$5.1 billion for FEMA, as well as \$13 billion in mandatory funds to Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

While I do support the President's request for additional funding to support our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is important that we continue to monitor and assess our mission and role in both of these countries, particularly given the array of investments we need to make right here at home.

Since 2001, Congress has provided close to \$1 trillion in direct funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of 18 emergency supplemental bills, not including the support we provided for the efforts in our regular annual Appropriations bills. Combined, it's estimated that we've spent between \$1.5 trillion to almost to \$3 trillion so far on these wars.

So I am very pleased that the amendments made in order by the rule will also provide us an opportunity to provide additional funding to the Senate passed bill for critical domestic programs, including \$10 billion for education jobs, \$5 billion for Pell grants and \$701 million for border security.

Of particular note, I am very pleased that the bill will include funds to settle both the Cobell v. Salazar and Pigford v. Vilsack class action lawsuits and it provides \$1 billion for summer jobs.

Finally, the supplemental will also include funding which is vital to an important segment of my constituency, our farmers and agricultural producers. The bill provides the Farm Service Agency (FSA), which is housed within the Department of Agriculture, with an additional \$31.5 million to cover the costs associated with direct loans, guaranteed loans, operating loans and

administrative expenses, which are so vital to our farmers, particularly in South Georgia.

The bill will require that the loans be made available to family farmers who may not qualify for agricultural credit through other commercial institutions in the tight credit market. While the FY2010 Agriculture Appropriations bill provided enough funding to meet demand at the time it was passed last year, demand for the farm ownership and operating loan programs has been dramatically higher than historical levels due to the lack of availability of conventional credit.

Madam Speaker, this Supplemental bill strikes, what I believe to be a fair and balanced approach for the emergency needs of our war fighters abroad and the critical domestic issues we face right here at home, and I support the bill.